



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**OPTIMIZATION OF PARAMETERS INVOLVED IN THE  
TRANSFORMATION OF OIL PALM USING THE BIOLISTIC METHOD**

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OF OIL PALM USING THE BIOLISTIC METHOD**

**By**

**AHMAD PARVEEZ B. GHULAM KADIR**

**Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor  
of Philosophy in the Faculty of Food Science and Biotechnology,  
Universiti Putra Malaysia.**

**January 1998**



**“IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, MOST GRACIOUS, MOST MERCIFUL”**

**Dedicated To :**

**My Parents : Hj. Ghulam Kadir and Hjh. Aishan Bibi**

**My Wife : Nor Muriani**

**My Sons : Haziq, Iman and Najib**

**My Special Brother : Salim**

**My Brothers and Teachers**

“By command of my Lord : Of knowledge it is only a little that is  
communicated (thought) to you (O men!)”

(Surah Al-Isra' : 85)

“It is He Who produces gardens, with trellises and without, and date-palms,  
and crops of diverse flavour, and the olive and the pomegranate,  
similar (in kind) and different (in variety)”

(Surah Al-An'am : 141)

He Who created seven heavens in harmony. You can see no fault in the Beneficent One's  
Creation; then look again: can you see any fault? Then look again and yet again; your  
sight will come back to you weakened and worn out”

(Surah Al-Mulk : 3-4)

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES .....	xii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xiii
LIST OF PLATES .....	xv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	xviii
ABSTRACT .....	xx
ABSTRAK .....	xxiii
CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION .....	1
II LITERATURE REVIEW .....	10
Genetic Transformation .....	10
<i>Agrobacterium</i> -mediated gene transfer .....	11
Advantages and Disadvantages of <i>Agrobacterium</i> -mediated Gene Transfer .....	15
Protoplast-mediated Gene Transfer .....	16
Polyethylene Glycol.....	17
Electroporation .....	17
Advantages and Disadvantages of Protoplast mediated Gene Transfer .....	17
Microprojectile Bombardment Gene Transfer .....	18
Advantages and Disadvantages of Microprojectile Bombardment Gene Transfer .....	22
Tissue Electroporation Gene Transfer .....	23
Silicon Carbide Gene Transfer .....	23
Pollen-mediated Gene Transfer .....	24



Advantages and Disadvantages of Pollen-mediated Gene Transfer .....	26
Microinjection-mediated Gene Transfer .....	26
Advantages and Disadvantages of Microinjection-mediated Gene Transfer. ....	27
Ultrasonication-mediated Gene Transfer .....	27
Advantages and Disadvantages of Ultrasonication-mediated Gene Transfer .....	28
Liposome-mediated Gene Transfer .....	28
Laser Microbeam-mediated Gene Transfer .....	29
Imbibition of Seeds Gene Transfer .....	29
Comparison of Transformation Methods .....	30
Production and Confirmation of Transgenic Plants.....	31
Reporter Genes .....	31
Selectable Marker Genes .....	33
Promoter .....	34
DNA Integration .....	35
Protein Expression .....	35
Transmission of Transgene Into Progeny .....	36
Transgene Silencing .....	37
Strategies for Avoiding Transgene Silencing .....	40
Modification of Plant Oil Composition .....	41
<i>Brassica napus</i> (Rapeseed) .....	43
<i>Glycine max</i> (Soybean) .....	49
<i>Gossypium hirsutum</i> (Cotton) .....	52
<i>Zea mays</i> (Maize) .....	53
<i>Elaeis guineensis</i> and <i>E. oleifera</i> ( Oil palms) .....	55
<i>Helianthus annus</i> (Sunflower) .....	57
<i>Arachis hypogaeae</i> (Groundnut) .....	58
<i>Simmondsia chinensis</i> (Jojoba) .....	59



	<i>Carthamus tinctorius</i> (Safflower) .....	59
	<i>Cocos nucifera</i> (Coconut) .....	59
	<i>Olea europeae</i> (Olive) .....	60
	<i>Linum usitatissimum</i> (Flax) .....	60
	Opportunitinities for genetic engineering of oil palm .....	61
III	MATERIAL AND METHODS .....	63
	Plant Materials .....	63
	Chemicals and Enzymes .....	63
	Plasmid Constructs .....	64
	Construction of pAP11 .....	65
	Plasmid DNA Digestion and Fragment Isolation .....	67
	Ligation .....	67
	Preparation of Competent Cells.....	67
	Bacterial Transformation .....	68
	Small Scale Plasmid Isolation .....	69
	Large Scale Plasmid Isolation .....	70
	DNA-microcarrier Preparation and Bombardment for PDS- 1000/He Apparatus .....	71
	DNA-microcarrier Preparation and Bombardment for <i>ACCELL<sup>TM</sup></i> Gun .....	73
	GUS Histochemical Assay .....	74
	GUS Flourometric Assay .....	74
	Experimental Design and Data Analysis.....	75
	Callus Initiation From Oil Palm Leaflet and Roots .....	75
	Callus Initiation From Oil Palm Immature Embryos .....	76
	Maintenance of the Embryogenic Calli .....	76
	Minimal Inhibitory Concentration of Selection Agents .....	76
	Production of Oil Palm Polyembryogenic Cultures .....	77
	Small Plantlet Production from Polyembryogenic Cultures ..	78

Root initiation from Oil Palm Cultures .....	78
Callus Initiation from Tobacco.....	79
Callus Initiation from Rice Immature Embryos .....	79
Selection and Regeneration of Transformants .....	80
Preparation of Total DNA from Callus Culture.....	81
Primers for PCR .....	81
Purification of Primers .....	82
Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) .....	82
Southern Transfer of DNA from Agarose gel to Nylon Membrane .....	83
Oligolabelling of DNA Fragments .....	84
Hybridization .....	84
Hygromycin Phosphotransferase (hpt) Assay.....	85
 IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSION .....	 86
Optimization of DNA Delivery Conditions.....	86
Delivery of DNA into Oil Palm Cultures .....	86
Removal of Endogenous GUS Background .....	86
Optimization of Physical Parameters .....	88
Aim : Optimization of Physical Parameters .....	88
Analysis of Variance .....	89
Effect of Helium Pressure .....	90
Distance from Rupture Disc to Macrocarrier.....	94
Distance from Macrocarrier to Stopping Plate.....	94
Distance from Stopping Plate to Target Tissue.....	95
Vacuum Pressure .....	97
Effect of Bombardment Number.....	98
Effect of Particle Type and Size.....	99
Effect of CaCl <sub>2</sub> and Spermidine on DNA-particle	

Precipitation .....	101
General Discussion .....	104
Optimized Physical Parameters .....	105
Optimization of Biological Parameters.....	106
Aim : Optimization of Biological Parameters.....	106
Analysis of Variance.....	106
Effect of Explant and Microcarrier Type.....	107
Effect of Time Interval from Subculture Prior to Bombardment .....	110
Effect of Immature Embryo Preculture Duration Prior to Bombardment .....	111
Effect of Post Bombardment Incubation Time.....	115
Effect of Genotype (Genetic Background).....	115
Effect of Osmoticum Types and Concentration.....	117
Effect of Pre-post Bombardment Culture Duration in 0.4M Mannitol .....	119
Effect of DNA Quantity Per Bombardment .....	121
Optimized Biological Parameters .....	123
Selection of Best Promoter .....	124
Importance of Selecting The Best Promoter for Oil Palm...	124
Selection of Best Promoter for Oil Palm .....	124
Selected Efficient Promoters .....	136
Determination of Minimal Inhibitory Concentration of Selection Agents . .....	137
Importance of Determining The Minimal Inhibitory Concentration of Selection Agents .....	137
Determination of Minimal Inhibitory Concentration of selection agents . .....	138
Effective Selective Agent .....	149
Aim : Optimization and Transformation Using the <i>ACCELL</i> <sup>TM</sup> Device .....	150

Optimization of DNA Delivery Condition for <i>ACCELL</i> <sup>TM</sup> Device .....	150
Selection of Transformed Callus .....	152
Analysis of Transformants .....	156
PCR Analysis .....	156
Southern Blot Hybridization Analysis .....	159
Regeneration of Transgenic Oil Palm Plants .....	164
Molecular Analysis of Putative Transgenic Plants .....	172
PCR Analysis .....	172
Southern Blot Hybridization Analysis .....	174
Rice as a Model for Monocot Transformation.....	177
Justification and Aims .....	177
Construction of The pAP11 Plasmid.....	178
Delivery of DNA Into Rice Immature Embryos.....	180
Selection and Regeneration of Transgenic Rice Plants.....	184
Analysis of Transgenic Plants and T1 Progenies .....	187
Analysis of T2 Progenies .....	191
 V CONCLUSION .....	 199
 BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	 203
APPENDIX	
A Schematic Representation of Transforming Plasmids.....	245
VITA .....	252
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS .....	253

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Anova of transient <i>gusA</i> gene expression for the optimization of physical parametersn .....	91
2 Anova of transient <i>gusA</i> gene expression for the optimization of biological parameters .....	108
3 Effect of explant source on <i>gusA</i> gene expression in embryogenic calli .....	110
4 Effect of duration between calli transferred to medium prior to bombardment on <i>gusA</i> gene expression in embryogenic calli .....	112
5 Effect of duration between bombardment and GUS staining on <i>gusA</i> gene expression in embryogenic calli .....	116
6 Comparison of promoter strength on transient <i>gusA</i> gene expression in oil palm tissues two days after bombardment .....	127
7 Effect of acceleration voltage and bombardment time after subculture on transient <i>gusA</i> gene expression on oil palm callus .....	151
8 Effect of selection agents concentration, acceleration voltage and time for selection exposure on the recovery of resistant embryogenic callus clumps .....	155
9 Number of resistant embryogenic calli showing positive for amplification of <i>gusA</i> , <i>bar</i> and <i>hpt</i> genes .....	160
10 Summary of phenotype and genotype analysis on T1 progenies of clone T0#6 .....	188
11 Analysis of T1 Progenies (T2) of Clone T0#6. ....	198
12 Summary of optimization of physical and biological parameters, promoter activity and optimal concentration of selection agents .....	200

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 Construction of pAP11 (Ubiquitin-hygromycin) plasmid for use in transformation .....	66
2 Effect of helium pressure (Psi) on transient <i>gusA</i> gene expression in oil palm embryogenic calli .....	92
3 Effect of distance from stopping plate to target tissue (cm) on transient <i>gusA</i> gene expression in oil palm embryogenic calli .....	96
4 Effect of microcarrier types and sizes on transient GUS gene expression in oil palm embryogenic calli .....	100
5 Effect of calcium chloride and spermidine in the DNA-microcarrier preparation mixture on transient <i>gusA</i> gene expression in oil palm embryogenic calli .....	102
6 Effect of preculture duration on transient <i>gusA</i> expression in oil palm immature embryos .....	114
7 Effect of type and concentration (Molar) of osmoticum sources on transient GUS expression .....	118
8 Effect of pre and post bombardment duration (hour) on media containing 0.4M mannitol on transient <i>gusA</i> gene expression .....	120
9 Effect of DNA concentration ( $\mu$ g) per bombardment on transient GUS expression .....	122
10 Comparison of transient histochemical <i>gusA</i> gene expression units in oil palm embryogenic calli and YLSP after bombardment with plasmids carrying different promoters .....	129
11 Comparison of transient histochemical <i>gusA</i> gene expression units in oil palm YLMP after bombardment with plasmids carrying different promoters .....	131
12 Comparison of transient flourometric <i>gusA</i> gene expression units in oil palm embryogenic calli and YLMP after bombardment with plasmids carrying different promoters .....	133

13	Comparison of transient flourometric <i>gusA</i> gene expression units in tobacco calli after bombardment with plasmids carrying different promoters .....	134
14	Comparison of the proliferation percentage of embryogenic calli after 30 days at different concentration of selection agents : A) kanamycin, geneticin G-418, neomycin; B) basta and C) hygromycin .....	139

## LIST OF PLATES

Plate	Page
1: Transient <i>gusA</i> gene expression in oil palm embryogenic calli after bombardment with plasmid pEmuGN showing different efficiencies of delivery .....	87
2 Comparison of transient <i>gusA</i> gene expression in oil palm embryogenic calli derived from different explants after bombardment with plasmid pEmuGN .....	109
3 Transient <i>gusA</i> gene expression in oil palm immature embryo after bombardment .....	113
4 Comparison of transient histochemical <i>gusA</i> gene expression in oil palm embryogenic calli after bombardment with plasmids carrying different promoters .....	125
5 Comparison of transient histochemical <i>gusA</i> gene expression in oil palm YLMP after bombardment with plasmids carrying different promoters .....	126
6 Proliferation of oil palm embryogenic calli on media containing various concentration of kanamycin : a) control - 0 mg/l; b) 500 mg/l; c) 750 mg/l; d) 1000 mg/l, e) 1500 mg/l and f) 2000 mg/l .....	140
7 Proliferation of oil palm embryogenic calli on media containing various concentration of genetycin-G418 : a) control - 0 mg/l; b) 50 mg/l; c) 250 mg/l; d) 1000 mg/l, e) 1500 mg/l and f) 2000 mg/l....	141
8 Proliferation of oil palm embryogenic calli on media containing various concentration of neomycin : a)50 mg/l; b) 500 mg/l; c) 1000 mg/l, d) 2000 mg/l .....	142
9 Proliferation of oil palm embryogenic calli on medium containing various concentration of basta : a) control - 0 mg/l; b) 1 mg/l; c) 20 mg/l; d) 40 mg/l, e) 50 mg/l and f) 250 mg/l.....	145



10	Proliferation of oil palm embryogenic calli on media containing various concentration of hygromycin : a) control - 0 mg/l; b) 10 mg/l, c) 40 mg/l and d) 250 mg/l .....	146
11	Production of resistant embryogenic callus .....	153
12	PCR analysis of oil palm embryogenic callus (transgenic and non-transgenic) using internal control primers.....	157
13	PCR analysis of transgenic oil palm embryogenic callus. ....	158
14	Southern blot hybridization of transgenic oil palm embryogenic calli.....	161
15	Southern blot hybridization of transgenic oil palm embryogenic callus .....	163
16	Southern blot hybridization of transgenic oil palm embryogenic callus. ....	165
17	Production of embryos and polyembryogenic cultures from transgenic embryogenic callus .....	167
18	Shoots production from polyembryogenic cultures derived from transgenic embryogenic callus. ....	168
19	Elongation of individually isolated shoots derived from transgenic embryogenic callus .....	169
20	Shoot elongation and root initiation of plantlets derived from transgenic embryogenic callus .....	170
21	PCR analysis of transgenic oil palm plants .....	173
22	Southern blot hybridization of transgenic oil palm plants .....	175
23	Verification of pAP9 .....	179
24	Verification of pAP11 .....	181
25	Confirmation of pAP11 .....	182

26	Bombardment of rice immature embryos .....	183
27	Hygromycin phosphotransferase assay of rice callus two days after bombardment with pAP11 .....	185
28	Isolation of transformed callus selected on hygromycin .....	186
29	PCR analysis of transgenic rice clones and T1 progenies of clone T0#6 .....	189
30	Southern blot hybridization on DNA of transgenic rice clones and progenies .....	190
31	Fertile transgenic T 1 plant of clone T0#6 as compared to untransformed control plant .....	192
32	Seeds collected from transgenic T1 plant compared to untransformed control plant .....	193
33	Hygromycin selection on T2 rice plants of transgenic T0#6 clone ....	195
34	PCR analysis of T2 progenies .....	197

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations were used in the text :

ACP	Acyl carrier protein
Act1	Rice actin 1 gene's promoter
Adh1	Maize alcohol dehydrogenase 1 gene's promoter
Anova	Analysis of variance
ATP	Adenosine triphosphate
<i>bar</i>	Gene coding for phosphinothricin acetyltransferase
BSA	Bovine serum albumin
CaCl <sub>2</sub>	Calcium chloride
35S CaMV	Cauliflower mosaic virus 35S gene's promoter
CsCl	Cesium Chloride
2,4-D	2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid
dNTP	Deoxynicotinamide triphosphate
EDTA	Ethylenediaminetetra acetic acid
Emu	A recombinant truncated maize alcohol dehydrogenase 1 gene promoter with enhancers elements from Adh1 gene and <i>Agrobacterium</i>
EtBr	Ethidium Bromide
GUS	β-Glucuronidase
<i>hpt</i>	Gene coding for hygromycin phosphotransferase
HCl	Hydrochloric acid
IAA	Indole-3-acetic acid
IBA	Indole-3-butyric acid
KAc	Potassium acetate
Kb	Kilobase
KCl	Potassium chloride
Kda	Kilodalton

KOH	Potassium hydroxide
KV	Kilovolt
LB	Luria Bertani broth
MgCl <sub>2</sub>	Magnesium chloride
MgSO <sub>4</sub>	Magnesium sulfate
MS	Murashige and Skoog
MU	Methyl umbelliferone
MUG	4-methyl umbelliferyl β-D-glucuronide
NAA	α-Naphthaleneacetic acid
NaCl	Sodium chloride
NaOH	Sodium hydroxide
NaPO <sub>4</sub>	Sodium phosphate
NH <sub>4</sub> Ac	Ammonium acetate
<i>nptII</i>	Gene coding for neomycin phosphotransferase
PCR	Polymerase chain reaction
PMSF	Phenylmethanesulfonylfluoride
PVP	Polyvinyl Pyrrolidone
SDS	Sodium dodecyl sulfate
T0	First generation of transgenic plants
T1	Progeny of T0 plant
T2	Progeny of T1 plant
Tris	Tris [hydroxymethyl] aminomethane
Triton X-100	T-octylphenoxypoly-etoxyethanol
Tween 20	Polyoxyethylene sorbiton monolaurate
Ubi1	Maize ubiquitin 1 gene's promoter
X-gluc	5-bromo-4-chloro-3-indoyl-glucuronide
YLMP	Young leaves from mature palm
YLSP	Young leaves from seedling palm

Abstract of thesis submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

## **OPTIMIZATION OF TRANSFORMATION TECHNIQUES TO OBTAIN TRANSGENIC OIL PALM**

By

**AHMAD PARVEEZ B. GHULAM KADIR**

JANUARY 1998

Chairman : Dr. K. Harikrishna

Faculty : Food Science and Biotechnology

Physical and biological parameters affecting DNA delivery into oil palm embryogenic calli using the biolistic device have been optimized. The physical parameters tested were : helium pressure, distance from rupture disc to the macrocarrier, distance from macrocarrier to the stopping plate, distance from stopping plate to the target tissue, vacuum pressure, number of bombardments, particle types and sizes, and the effect of calcium chloride and spermidine on microcarrier-DNA binding. The optimized biological parameters were: explant types with gold microcarrier, explant types with tungsten, duration of callus culture in fresh medium prior to bombardment, duration between bombardment and GUS staining, genotype, immature embryo preculture duration, DNA concentration, osmoticum type and concentration and osmoticum treatment duration before and after bombardment. Independent experiments were carried out to study the effects of each parameter and its

variables on transient expression. Two days after bombardment, the tissues were stained with GUS assay buffer for 16-20 hours at 37°C and the blue spots counted under a binocular microscope. All the variables used in these experiments were found to be significantly different except for vacuum pressure, bombardment number and genotype.

The efficiency of GUS gene expression was measured in embryogenic calli and young leaves of mature and seedling palms using five constructs carrying different promoters : Emu; Ubi1; Act1, 35S and Adh1 were evaluated to identify the most suitable promoter for use in oil palm. The GUS gene expression from the different promoters was assayed histochemically and fluorometrically from a total of 200 plates of target tissues in eight independent experiments. Significant effects on transient GUS gene expression were demonstrated by each of the different promoters tested.

The effectiveness of kanamycin; geneticin (G-418); neomycin, hygromycin and basta as selection agents to inhibit growth of oil palm embryogenic calli was evaluated. Embryogenic calli were separately exposed to all these selection agents at different concentrations ranging from 1 to 2000 mg/l for a period of one month. This was done in two replicates and repeated twice to ensure reproducibility of the selection system. Of the five compounds tested, hygromycin and basta were found to be most suitable as selection agents for oil palm as they can stop the growth of embryogenic calli at lower concentrations.

Bombarded embryogenic calli were exposed to 40 or 80mg/l of selective agents after 1 or 3 weeks. It was found that there were no significant differences in the number of resistant embryogenic calli produced per plate when selected at different concentrations and time. The presence of transgenes in the resistant embryogenic calli was confirmed by PCR and Southern analysis. Transgenic embryogenic calli were later regenerated into whole plants and their transgenic status verified by PCR and Southern analysis. Problems faced during the study and their solutions are also discussed.

As oil palm has a long breeding cycle, inheritance of transgenes cannot be demonstrated within the period of this study. Therefore, rice, a model crop for monocot transformation, was also used for transformation experiments. Calli derived from immature embryos were bombarded and were selected on hygromycin. Resistant calli isolated were regenerated into whole plants. Two transgenic lines were obtained. T1 and T2 from one of the clones were also produced and analysed. Integration and inheritance of the transgenes were followed by phenotypic and genotypic analysis.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia bagi memenuhi syarat untuk memperolehi Ijazah Doktor Falsafah.

**PENGOPTIMUMAN TEKNIK-TEKNIK TRANSFORMASI UNTUK  
MEMPEROLEHI KELAPA SAWIT TRANSGENIK**

Oleh

**AHMAD PARVEEZ B. GHULAM KADIR**

JANUARI 1998

Pengerusi : Dr. K. Harikrishna

Fakulti : Sains Makanan dan Bioteknologi

Parameter-parameter biologi dan fizikal yang mempengaruhi penghantaran DNA ke dalam kalus embriogenik kelapa sawit menggunakan alat biolistik telah berjaya dioptimakan. Parameter-parameter fizikal yang telah diuji adalah : tekanan helium, jarak diantara cakera pecah ke pembawa makro, jarak diantara pembawa makro ke piring penghenti, jarak diantara piring penghenti ke tisu sasaran, tekanan hampagas, bilangan tembakan, saiz dan jenis pembawa mikro serta kesan kalsium klorida dan spermidin terhadap pengabungan DNA dan pembawa mikro. Parameter-parameter biologi yang telah diuji pula adalah : jenis eksplan menggunakan pembawa mikro emas, jenis eksplan menggunakan pembawa mikro tungsten, jangkamasa pengsubkulturan ke media segar sebelum tembakan, jangkamasa antara tembakan dan pewarnaan GUS, genotip, jangkamasa pra-pengkulturan embrio tidak matang



matang, kepekatan DNA, jenis dan kepekatan bahan osmotik dan jangkamasa tindakan osmotik sebelum dan selepas tembakan. Ujikaji berasingan telah dijalankan untuk mengkaji kesan setiap parameter dan pembolehubah ke atas ungkapan sementara. Dua hari selepas tembakan, tisu diwarnakan menggunakan penimbal aseii GUS selama 16-20 jam pada suhu 37°C dan bintik-bintik biru yang dihasilkan telah dikira dibawah mikroskop binokular. Setiap pembolehubah yang digunakan menunjukkan perbezaan bererti kecuali, tekanan hampagas, bilangan tembakan dan genotip.

Keupayaan ungkapan gen GUS oleh lima plasmid yang membawa promoter-promoter berbeza : Emu; Ubi1; Act1, 35S dan Adh1 telah dinilai keatas kalus embriogenik dan daun-daun muda dari pokok semaian dan pokok matang. Ini adalah untuk memilih promoter-promoter yang sesuai untuk kelapa sawit. Ungkapan gen GUS oleh promoter-promoter berbeza telah diasei menggunakan kaedah histokimia dan fluorometrik ke atas 200 piring tisu sasaran dan di dalam 8 ujikaji berasingan. Promoter-promoter tersebut telah menunjukkan kesan yang bererti terhadap ungkapan sementara gen GUS.

Kecekapan lima agen pemilihan : kanamisin; genetisin G-418; neomisin, higromisin dan basta untuk merencat pertumbuhan kalus embriogenik kelapa sawit telah dinilai. Kalus embriogenik telah didedahkan secara berasingan kepada kepekatan berbeza (1-2000mg/l) ejen pemilihan untuk tempoh satu bulan. Ujikaji ini telah dijalankan secara replikasi dan diulang sebanyak dua kali untuk memastikan kebolehulangan hasil. Dari kelima-lima ejen pemilihan